

who usually regard themselves as innocent of the crime of cramming, will, of course, at first hearing, be generally rejected. But let us see what it means. It means that definitions made for, and not by, the learner—made by the constructor out of facts which he knows, but the learner does not know—rules made for, and not by, the learner, out of principles which the maker has, but the learner has not, investigated—general propositions, of whatever kind, framed and particulars which the framer has, and the learner has not, manipulated—are the results of other people's labors, and, if appropriated by the learner without previous exercise of his own mind upon them, are unlawfully appropriated—crammed, in short; and the teacher who is an accomplice in the transaction is, *de facto*, a crammer.

For instance: Somebody or other, say Mr. Blank—a man, not a child—after well considering what is meant by “language,” its “nature” and “use” and the relation of what is called Grammar to it, writes down: “Grammar is that art which treats of the nature and use of language.” He looks with complacency at his work, considers it very simply and clearly expressed, and assumes that it is admirably suited for the first lesson in English Grammar. He therefore confidently offers it to a child, who is utterly ignorant of the abstractions “art,” “nature,” “use,” “language,” contained in it. But what, after all, does it really represent? It represents Mr. Blank's knowledge, thought, and experience; but it represents no knowledge, thought, or experience of the child. It is a result which he has had no share in gaining. It is matter, therefore, which his mind cannot possibly digest. The words are absolutely unintelligible. They do not stand for ideas to him at all. He can understand *apple*, *stone*, *house*, *flower*, &c., and when he sees these words, they call up ideas more or less definite of the things they represent; but “art, nature of language, use of language,” call up no ideas whatever. He may have heard the words, but he heard them merely as sounds, and they are sounds and nothing else now. The definition might almost have been written in Chinese. What, then, is to be done? It is obvious that the mind—the understanding—cannot be roused to action by sounds which mean nothing,

which suggest no ideas, which excite not the smallest interest, which provoke no appetite. Natural feeding, then, is out of the question. The teacher has, however, one unfailing resource. He knows that the child is a compound of the sensational and intelligent—that he has something in him of the parrot as well as of the rational man. He knows, moreover, that in this case it is of no avail to appeal to the rational man. He therefore sets altogether aside the distinction between the intelligent child and unintelligent parrot, and forces him to cram down into his memory the empty words which mean to him absolutely nothing; and if at some examination the child, when asked, “What is Grammar?” can answer, “That art which treats of the nature and use of language,” he flatters himself that he has been successful in teaching Grammar, and probably gives himself out to the world as an educator. An educator, forsooth! He is nothing but an adept in the artificial production of stupidity!

Take another instance. The teacher holds up some object before the learner, and, looking at it in his own hand, proceeds to describe it. It is, he says, “hard, cold to the touch, heavy, divided into such and such parts,” &c. Having finished his comments, he puts it away. That teacher is a crammer; he is abetting in the act of unlawful appropriation; he is preventing the learner from gaining experience for himself, by handing over to him the results of his own experience, and stuffing him with them. He knows, because he has exhausted the action of his senses upon the object, that it is “hard,” “heavy,” &c.; but the learner does not know this. His knowledge is limited to what sight tells him. It proceeds no further; but he might have known by his personal experience, known of his own knowledge, all that the teacher tells him—might in fact, have fed himself; but the teacher chooses to feed, that is, cram him, and by so doing cramps his powers, and hinders mental digestion, and he goes off moreover with only a morsel or two of food, instead of a whole meal. No complete idea has been formed, he has simply apprehended, he has not been permitted to comprehend. The teacher has not seen that it is the learner's own self-activity, that constitutes his education; and that, to hand over to him results which he has not earned, is